

Exaggerating Tunisia's "Tolerance" And Ignoring The Role Of France

What [Dalia Dassa Kaye](#) fails to note is the role of Bourguiba and the Destour Party, and of the French language, and consequently of the creation of a Tunisian elite that is both secular and has access to another, wider, advanced, non-Arab and non-Muslim world, the world of rational thought and the Enlightenment, through French-language newspapers and television channels, both Tunisian and French. This secular class – the Tunisians who “want to be French” – are opposed by the non-secular class of those who “want to be Saudis.” The very particular background of the Tunisian “success” has to be understood; the article does not mention Bourguiba, does not mention the role of the French language, or of French-language schools, or of the ability of the Tunisian secular elite, to study in France. The suggestion that Tunisia’s example can be emulated elsewhere, without discussing the reasons for Tunisia’s uniqueness, is disappointing.